

**In the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraph on page 1 titled "Cross-Reference to Related Applications" with the following paragraph:

-- The present application is a divisional application of U.S. Application Serial No. 09/185,803 filed November 4, 1998, ~~allowed~~, now U.S. Patent No. 6,190,620, which claims priority to Japanese Patent Application No. 10-029170, filed January 27, 1998, and Japanese Patent Application No. 9-302654, filed November 5, 1997, the disclosures of which ~~is~~ are incorporated herein by reference in ~~its~~ their entirety. --

Please replace the paragraph starting on page 15, line 22 through page 16, line 13 with the following paragraph:

-- In the accompanying drawings, the reference characters are defined as follows: 1, 201 or 301, slurry oxidation tank; 2, absorption tower; 3, mist eliminator; 4, flue gas outlet section; 5, header pipe; 6, circulating pump; 7, nozzle; 8, flue gas inlet section; 9 and 20, return pipeline; 10 or 24, discharge end; 11, upper withdrawal opening; 12, 14, 15, 21, 22 and 23, valves; 13, fluid receiver; 16, return pump; 17 or 17', oxygen feed nozzle; 18 and 19, pipelines; 25, 202 or 303, oxygen feeding means; 203 or 302, agitator; 204, agitating blades; 30, spray pipe; 31, fluid reservoir; 32, pipeline; 33, pump; 34, delivery pipe; 35, injection orifice; 36, blower; 37, pipeline; 38, exhaust duct; 39 and 40, pipelines; 101, feed nozzle; 102, nozzle header; a, combustion exhaust gas; b, absorbing fluid; c, cleaned exhaust gas; d, absorbent; e, oxygen-containing gas; f, waste fluid; and g, liquid surface; ~~A, B or C, view in the direction of arrow C. A, B, or C denote directions from which to view certain figures, e.g., A is referenced for Figure 4, B is referenced for Figure 5, and C is referenced for Figure 6.~~ --

Please replace the paragraph on page 17, lines 8-23 with the following paragraph:

-- In this wet flue gas desulfurizer, flue gas ~~[[ A]] FG~~ introduced through a flue gas inlet section 8 is brought into gas-liquid contact with the absorbent slurry injected from

nozzles 7 and flowing downward, so the absorbent slurry absorbs sulfur dioxide present in the flue gas and then falls into slurry oxidation tank 1. In the absorbent slurry with slurry oxidation tank 1, a small amount of limestone used as the absorbent and gypsum so formed are suspended or dissolved. The absorbent slurry containing gypsum is withdrawn by means of a withdrawal pump (not shown) and introduced into a solid-liquid separator (also not shown), where it is separated into solid matter (i.e., gypsum) and filtrate. Thus the absorbed sulfur dioxide is completely oxidized to yield gypsum as a by-product. The filtrate is transferred to a filtrate tank (not shown and mixed with limestone, and the resulting absorbent slurry is returned back to slurry oxidation tank 1. --

Please replace the paragraphs on page 22, lines 14 through page 23, line with the following paragraphs:

-- This embodiment is specifically described below with reference to FIGs. [[ 3]] 3A and 4. In FIG. [[ 3]] 3A, components similar to those shown in FIG. 9 are designated by the same reference characters as given in FIG. 9.

In FIG. [[ 3]] 3A, a wet flue gas desulfurizer is constructed so that this apparatus has an absorption tower 2 for effecting wet desulfurization, a fluid reservoir (slurry oxidation tank) 31 for storing an absorbing fluid b containing an alkaline absorbent d (e.g., lime) is disposed below absorption tower w, and the absorbing fluid b within the fluid reservoir 31 is raised by means of a circulating pump 6 and sprayed from spray pipes 30 disposed in the lower part of absorption tower 2. --

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